1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

159 and five children, two from the first wife and three from the second and we are living happily.

MOTIRAM: A KOL WHO BECAME A PROSPEROUS FARMER

I was born in Kotmi (in North East Central Provinces near Pendra). My grandfather came to Kotmi from a place in Rewa State and when he arrived here he had with him my father who was still just a boy. My father was a hard working man and when his father died he had to shift for himself and found work as a coolie wherever he could find employment. Finally he got together enough money to be able to purchase the right to farm a small bit of land. This land was obtained from the *malguzar* who was very kind to him. When I was still a very small boy and not long after we got this land my grandmother, who had lived to a ripe old age, died happily for she saw my father established on a piece of land he could call his own. My father had two brothers who also owned a share of the land and [428] helped start the farming, but both of them died without issue, leaving the control of the land with us alone. As soon as I was old enough to work I would go out with my father to tend the cattle in the forests. Later on I went by myself. When I was about twenty years of age my father died, but I had been married before that and I began to control the land and care for it.

I am now quite independent and all along have never had to work as a coolie for another person. I am very proud of this fact. I even hire other people to work for me for I now have twenty-two acres of land with a good house of thick mud walls upon it and cattle [651] sheds as well. I have about thirty animals: goats, cows and bullocks. I pay a yearly land tax to the *malguzar* of Rs. 9, and a tax on my carts and animals which amounts to Rs. 7 per year.

My family consists of four sons and one daughter. Two sons and one daughter are now married and live here in the same home with [871] me. They help me care for the fields and crops. A younger son goes regularly to the Mission School in Kotmi and studies in the third Hindi [481] class. I am glad that this son can get an education and I pay the regular fees for him. He is very clever, walks two miles to school and is very regular in his attendance.

Although I have always had money for our food and have never suffered that way, still we have suffered much through illnesses and death. We go often to the Mission dispensary in Kotmi for our [165 163] medicines. My first wife died but not before giving birth to seven

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231 422 families in Kharara Ghat owned neither goats nor cattle. If cattle are allowed to graze in the reserve forests the yearly payment is twelve annas for a bullock or a cow and six to eight annas for a goat. Young animals may graze without payment.

In Panagar and Deori chickens are the common possession and there are but a few who have goats and cattle. At Benda, with 15 houses of Kols, there are six head of cattle and five goats. They cannot raise chickens there as they are plagued with cats, both domestic and [778] from the jungle, which makes this impossible. Cats are regarded as sacred animals and are called "mothers" and may not be killed[1]. The villages which are largely made up of people employed in industrial enterprises are found to have few animals. The more agricultural type of village has more cattle; but those who consider that they are here today and gone tomorrow do not have many animals. In the Kol *mahallas* about Jubbulpore the number of cattle is not large. Nowhere did we find a Kol who owned a horse. As was seen[2] they have a [784] tradition that causes them to consider a horse something that should not be touched.

427 651 *Taxes.* Direct taxes are paid by very few Kols, for unless he actually owns his land the taxes are not paid directly. Those who take land on shares from the *malguzar* pay him one-third of the crop as his rent; in other cases a certain sum per *khandi* of seed sown is agreed upon. Some Kols about Barela told us they paid seven rupees for 1¼ acres of *malguzari* land and another of the same place fourteen rupees for three acres of the same. The houses in which the Kols of Barela live are built on *malguzari* land. When a new house is put up they pay the *malguzar* two to three rupees depending on the size of the house and report that subsequently no further land rent is asked for. As long as the buildings are occupied by that man, and kept in good repair the land on which it stands can be controlled by the builder. 651 In other places there seems to be a yearly tax for houses; on the municipal land in Jubbulpore it was two rupees per house per year; at Garha, near the edge of Jubbulpore town limits the landowner asked one rupee per house per year. This amount seems to be the general rate or tax to *malguzars* for the houses or huts in which they live. In [466] the industrial settlements they are given rent-free land on which they may erect their huts when they live on the property of the company employing them.

1 See page 198.
2 See pages 34-35; 210, 211.

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When the reserved forests are used there are certain fees that the Kols must pay. In Katni, along the Great Deccan Road, we found that the area of the house was considered for assessing the tax, and that the rate there was annas four per one hundred square feet of land area. In addition to this each family had to pay four annas per year for "sanitation". The standard rates for grazing cattle near Katni are as follows: buffalo Rs. 2-8-0 per year; cattle 0-12-0 to 1-4-0; goats 0-8-0 and to the shepherd who took them out daily annas four per head per year.

Debt. Debt does not seem to be as heavy a burden upon Kols in British India as it is upon their Hindu neighbours. The normal debt of the Indian cultivator has been estimated to be well over two hundred rupees. The surveys we made among the Kols seem to indicate that most of them will be found to have small debts of one kind or another, but that it is not the heavy burden that is so often found in village India; also that the Kol *panchayats* or councils are active in discouraging indebtedness. Out of eleven Kol families questioned in Barela six indicated that they were in debt. The highest debt was Rs. 16/- and the total of the six amounted to only Rs. 42/-. This is much lower than one would expect. Debts were mostly acquired for clothes and marriages. They were made in the Barela bazaar and interest on them was paid at the rate of two pice per rupee per month, which is an interest rate of 37½%. On the other hand one Kol family reported that they made loans to farmers and others on good security and that they had about Rs. 300/- loaned out in that manner.

It was sometimes the custom, in order to avoid debt at the time of marriage on the part of some poor family, for members of the village to subscribe one rupee per family to help defray the expenses. This was considered as a loan which would be paid back later without interest charges if the family was able. The heads of the Kharara Ghat families were questioned about debt. It was found that only three were really involved: one owed fifty rupees incurred by the purchase of a field and a wedding in the family; another ten rupees, also for a wedding and a third fifteen rupees for the same reason. In some other places such as Panagar and Deori, debt was found to be more common, and in Panagar the Kols who farmed land would often take as a loan an amount up to one-third of the expected produce of their lands. Usually the respective *panchayats* watch the matter of the indebtedness of the community quite closely and in some places money may not be borrowed without its consent. In the industrial and city centres indebtedness is quite common, much more so than